

MARYLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Meeting Minutes

August 26, 2005

Columbia Campus

MEMBERS PRESENT: Benjamin Bahan, Ph.D.; Cynthia Neese-Bailes, PhD.; David S. Birnbaum; William J. Bowman; John Ertel, Ph.D.; Anjali Desai-Margolin; Charles E. Poyer, Jr.; Barbara Raimondo; Elliot Rosen; Carol Stevens.

MEMBERS ABSENT: H. Mitchell Goldberg; Sandra N. Harriman; Robin Kittleman; Edgar B. Palmer; David A. Severn, Esq.; Laurie Yaffe.

ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL: Elizabeth Kameen, Esq.

INTERPRETERS: Roberta Quinn; Brenda Kelly-Frey.

President Raimondo called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. Roll call was called by passing around the roll call sheet.

The Executive committee approved a change to the agenda. The Superintendent's goals for the school year were added under NEW BUSINESS.

A **MOTION** was made at 9:15 a.m. to approve the Agenda with the change -SECONDED – PASSED.

A **MOTION** was made to approve the May 2005 BOT meeting minutes – SECONDED – PASSED.

President's Report:

President Raimondo informed the members that response letters were sent to all the community members who spoke at the May Open Forum.

Over the summer, the BOT President received an email request to lengthen the amount of time people have to speak during the Open Forum session. The Executive Committee discussed this request and approved an increase from three (3) minutes per person to five (5) minutes per person. The Board will also have five (5) minutes to ask questions of the presenter.

It was requested that Board members receive copies of the response letters sent out by the BOT President. Copies of letters that have already been sent out will be provided to Board members by the Superintendent's office.

Ms. Raimondo told the Board that she had sent a letter during the summer to the Department of Budget and Management requesting the Superintendent's annual increase be approved.

The President reminded the Board members that the BOT By-laws require that members attend at least fifty (50) percent of the yearly Board meetings. Those who fail to attend at least fifty percent, unless excused by the Governor, are considered to have resigned. Since Ms. Ira-Jean Harper missed over fifty percent of the meetings in the last two years, she no longer is a MSD Board of Trustees member.

Ms. Raimondo shared with the Board that both she and Laurie Yaffe attended the last Unity and Diversity meeting at the end of the school year in May. The Board will continue to be involved in the work done by this committee in the new school year.

Barbara Raimondo and Sandy Harriman, Chairperson of the Trusteeship Committee, have already met once and will be meeting again soon with the full committee to develop an evaluation form for the Board. This evaluation will be used during the Board retreat.

The President explained that the "Gift Fund" meeting took place in June. Several BOT members attended along with members of the MSD Foundation to discuss the different funds and to get a clearer understanding of how the money is managed.

President Raimondo shared that she and Superintendent Tucker are very involved with the organization known as The Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD). The group has been working with the US Department of Education on IDEA, NCLB and how these laws impact children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. In September, both the Superintendent and President Raimondo will be attending a summit in Delaware to discuss Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for Deaf Schools and develop a proposal that can be presented to the Department of Education.

Vice President Report:

No Report

Secretary's Report:

No report

Treasurer's Report:

Former Treasurer, Mitch Goldberg, is awaiting the final reports from the Foundation's treasurer. Once he has all the latest paperwork, this will all be passed on to the BOT's new Treasurer, Mr. William Bowman.

Superintendent's Report:

Superintendent Tucker started his report by announcing that the school's attorney, Ms. Elizabeth Kameen, has been promoted to Chief Counsel for the Maryland State Department of Education. The Attorney General's office is currently searching for her replacement.

The Superintendent informed the Board members that the start of School on Monday August 29th would mark the 138th year of operation for the Maryland School for the Deaf in Frederick and the 33rd year for the Columbia Campus. Mr. Tucker shared that the enrollment numbers for the start of this school year are slightly lower than in past years. The graduating class of 2005 had 41 students which greatly reduced our numbers in the upper grades. The increase in enrollment is now being seen in the Family Education Department. The school will be starting the 2005/2006 school year with eighty families already enrolled and several

more interested in coming to MSD. The addition of the cochlear implant program has contributed to this large increase in the Family Ed department. Currently thirty two of the eighty children in that department have implants.

Superintendent Tucker announced that the fiscal '06 budget was healthy but since the price of gas is increasing rapidly, expenses are being monitored very closely. Mr. Tucker informed the Board that 93% of the budget is reserved for salary and benefits. This leaves only 7% for all the other expenses including the \$150,000 required to cover the health subsidy for the employees. Mr. Tucker and Ms. Schwertman, CFO for MSD, are currently meeting to plan out the FY '07 budget. While the construction money for the elevator on the Columbia Campus and the new elementary building on the Frederick Campus has been approved, MSD is monitoring any discussion which may delay the master plan project.

AYP results are in for the Columbia Campus but are not complete yet for the Frederick Campus as MSDE has not finished tabulating the results of the reading test. Unlike the previous year, the Columbia Campus did not meet AYP. The Frederick Campus did meet AYP in math this past year. By law, a school must fail to meet AYP two years in a row to move into the Improvement phase. Both campuses have met AYP every other year so far so MSD is not on the Improvement track.

The school has conducted a follow up survey in regards to the information technology and facilities on both campuses. Mr. Baker is currently analyzing the results of this survey to see if there has been improvement since the original accreditation survey was conducted. Mr. Tucker announced that he and Mr. Baker are currently working on developing focus groups. The goal is to interview parents who gave the school "very satisfied" marks and those who gave "very dissatisfied" marks on the accreditation survey. The focus groups will be conducted by the University of Baltimore. A discussion was held regarding how much involvement the school should have in the focus group process. It was decided that the only input given by the school will be the contact information for the potential interviewees. Board member Carol Stevens offered to provide transportation for any interviewee who would not have the means to get to the focus group location.

Mr. Tucker gave the Board an update on the Anti-bullying Program for both the Columbia and Frederick campuses. The consultant, Jack Gilbert has met with both campus Principals and will be conducting a survey in the early fall. Once the results of the survey have been compiled, the school will receive a report on if and where the school may have problems and how they can be best handled. The Superintendent explained that a new State law requires all public schools in Maryland to report all incidents of bullying to the Maryland Department of Education. This will be an annual report for at least the next seven years. Mr. Gilbert will help our administrators with the skills they will need to conduct proper investigations.

Superintendent Tucker announced that Ms. Celinda Rother, agency grant writer, was successful in receiving a second grant from the Verizon Foundation. This grant – Bridging the Literacy Gap – will provide the funds needed to put Smart Boards in all of the middle school classrooms.

Mr. Tucker shared with everyone that Homecoming this year is scheduled for October 15th. The football game will begin at 2:00 p.m. The Orioles will be matched against the Alabama School for the Deaf and Blind. There will be many activities through out the day on the

Frederick Campus.

The International Congress for the Education of the Deaf (ICED) held its conference in Holland this past July. Mr. Tucker and Dr. Richard Steffan attended the conference to represent MSD. Mr. Tucker explained that cochlear implant information dominated the conference. The next ICED conference will be held in Canada in 2010.

Executive Committee Report:

President Raimondo informed the Board members that the Executive Committee met in June to review and approve the Frederick and Columbia Student/Parent handbooks and the Employee handbook. All three were approved with some minor modifications

Education Committee Report:

No Report

Fiscal Matters/Facilities Management Committee:

Mr. Bowman announced that the committee had met earlier in the day to review the proposed budget with Ms. Suzanne Schwertman. Ms. Schwertman will present the proposed budget during the New Business portion of the meeting.

Personnel Committee Report:

Mr. Rosen informed the Board members that he and President Raimondo had met with Superintendent Tucker to review his evaluation. Mr. Rosen shared that they had a very good meeting.

Student Life Committee:

No Report

Trusteeship Committee:

President Raimondo announced that the committee is still collecting additional names they can submit to the Governor's office for appointment consideration.

Old Business –

A retreat for all Board members is being planned for the fall. Possible topics for training were recommended by Board members. A discussion was held regarding what days of the week to have the retreat. It was decided that Ms. Currin would send an email asking for several dates from the members and then, based on that information, a location would be chosen. President Raimondo and Chairperson Harriman will develop the agenda based on the suggested list of topics given in the meeting. Ms. Raimondo will look into the possibility of having a consultant provide training during the retreat.

The Board evaluation will be a part of the program for the retreat. It was discussed that several interpreters will be needed for this event.

Ms. Suzanne Schwertman presented an overview of the 15 year Master Plan for the Maryland School for the Deaf. The plan was originally approved in 2001. For the Columbia Campus, two major issues are being addressed: 1) Americans with Disabilities Act upgrades 2) Safe athletic fields.

The bathrooms in the Baker dorms have been renovated so they are more accessible for students who use wheel chairs. An elevator will be constructed in the Main building as the

ramp currently being used does not meet the proper incline standards. The State Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) allows for removal of one of the current parking lots. The lot will then be turned in to an athletic field for the students. The construction money for the elevator has been approved in our Capital Budget. The renovations to meet ADA requirements are being completed out of our operating budget with some help from the Department of Disabilities.

On the Frederick Campus, the first phase is building the new elementary school, Family Education center and support services department. This building will be located on the Loats Farm area of the school's property. Once this project is complete, the health center will move out of the Barry Hall dormitory building allowing the school to demolish Barry Hall and build the new Student Center in its place. The current Kent/McCanner building will then be demolished and replaced with much needed parking and a bus loop. Ms. Schwertman explained that eventually, the dorms would be replaced by more modern cottages for the residential students. A second group home is planned for the Loats Farm area.

New Business –

Ms. Schwertman briefly explained the Minimum Funding law to show how the school develops the base figures for the budget. The FY 06 budget includes 23.5 million dollars for a cost of living increase for the employees and the FY 07 budget will complete the final adjustment for the faculty pay plan approved two years ago. Also included in the budget are the expenses for upgrading the computer network, a new activity bus, utilities, gas, increased health costs and the tuition reimbursement program. This year's budget is 5.5% over the 2006 budget.

A **MOTION** was made to approve the MSD budget as presented – **SECONDED – PASSED.**

Open Forum:

At 1:03 p.m. the first presenter came before the BOT.

Mr. Hans Weidig shared his concerns with the Board with regards to communication issues. Even with the addition of email, this parent finds that notices of school events are late and information on delays or cancellations are either late or non-existent. Mr. Weidig also shared his belief that hearing parents of deaf children are not appreciated at MSD.

Mr. Alvin Amberg, Student Life Counselor on the Frederick Campus, requested additional equipment for the dorms/supervisors. Mr. Amberg requested that video phones be installed in every dorm and that supervisors be provided a pager.

Mr. Amberg also requested that the Board consider reviewing the pay scale for the Student Life Counselors as they do the teachers' pay scale.

Mr. James Schiller shared his concerns regarding the future of MSD. Mr. Schiller distributed a copy of the letter he sent to the Maryland Department of Education outlining his concerns. Issues such as staff turnover, the IEP process, supervision and lack of diversity in the elementary department were presented.

Open Forum ended at 1:30 p.m.

New Business continued: The Superintendent's professional goals are complete. The school

goals will be reviewed by the Personnel Committee and brought to the November BOT meeting for approval.

The minutes to the Closed Session of the May, 2005 meeting were distributed for review.

A **MOTION** was made to approve the minutes as written – SECONDED – PASSED.

The minutes to the May 2005 Closed Session meeting regarding a Personnel Issue were distributed for review.

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A **MOTION** was made to approve the minutes as written – SECONDED – PASSED.

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anjali Desai-Margolin
Secretary